joseph Goodwin

# A Bargain for Bachelors, Or: The BEST WIFE In the World for a PENNY:

Fairly Offered

To young-men for directing their choice, and to Maids for their Imitation.

By Mrs. *Susanna Fesserson.*

*You that have got no Wives, do not refuse,*
*To learn from hence whom you may fitly chuse;*
*And you that have 'um, here may let them see,*
*Better then in their Glass, what they should be.*

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# *The Vertuous matron,*

OR,

# The Incomparable Wife, &c.

I Am confident, Gallants! you no sooner hear this Tytle of, A bargain for Batchelors, cryed under your windows, but you'l presently conceit I am some old decayed Procuress that by chance have got a pretty handsome bit of temptation out of the Country, and that this is a Bill giving notice, where her Maiden-head is to be sold by inch of Candle; and methinks I see you already flinging the Foot-boys over the Belconies for haste to get the advertisement before your Neighbours; but in truth, Gentlemen, you are like to be honestly cheated, what I present you with is a wife; and to add to your surprize, one that is honest and vertuous, with whose charms I have reason to suspect you but little aquainted, since of late you have got a silly trick to despise and laugh at her very name, as if you could not be witts unless you proclaim'd your own selves Sons of whores, nor testifie your regards to our sex but by dishonour-

dishonouring your Mothers; for your conversion from this bruitish heresie, I shall venture to set her picture before you, therefore wipe your eyes (I mean those of your understanding if you have them about you) and view her in her native lustre.

A good wife is the temperate zone, where alone love delights to inhabit, and free both from the frosts of peevish virginity, and scorching heats of rageing lust, injoys a perpetual spring; She is the perfection of a man, or a lost rib restored to compleat and perpetuate humane nature; a true coppy of our Mother Eve before she dialogu'd with the Serpent; a second edition of female Divinity (with the Errata's corrected) polished with beauty, and bound up with chastity to convince the world that piety and goodness; The vertues and the graces are all of the feminine gender, she's an innocent iulep in an amorous fit, and a most restorative Cordial after 'tis over; A young mans Mistris to advise him, a middle aged mans companion to solace him, and an old Mans Nurse to cherish him; a help-meet in the cares of the world, and toils of business, and the most agreeable diversion at hours of leisure; an inseparable second self that mitigates all a mans misfortunes by dividing and sharing them, and doubles his joys and prosperities by an equal participation; The guardian of her husbands honour, and the conduit through which successive nobility derives its glories, and to whose integrity the law commits the conveyance both of Titles and inheritances: She is the Elixir of temporal comforts, the onely A-

mulet against the malice of fortune, the most to be admired, and the most to be desired thing here below, and next to Abrahams bosome, every wise man would chuse to lye in hers.

But this is onely a draught of her perfections in Landscape, a transient confused prospect of her excellencies in the Lump, be pleased to take a more particular survey, and each Item will transport you with love and wonder.

She scarce thinks her self obliged to those that applaud her for being chast, since 'twould be a curse and a punishment for her to be otherwise, and though self-murtherers are justly condemn'd, yet we never read of rewards given to people meerly because they did not make away themselves; honesty is the greatest commendation for a bad Woman, but in a good one 'tis the least; She chuseth not a Husband by the strength of his back, nor at all considers the lusty Calf, or complexion; if Rude Language assault her ear, innocency keeps it out from infecting her mind, and saves her other vertues the labour; She prevents the designs of the debauched at a distance, and by a strict guard on her modesty and aweful carriage, secures her self from being tempted, holding it for a Maxime (though a Paradox.)

That she alone is chast that ne'r was try'd,
He comes too near that comes to be deny'd.

Thus she shuns all occasions that may commit a Rape upon her soul, or fill it with wandring petulant Idea's, and therefore reads the practice of Piety oftner then Cleopatra or Cassandra, and takes more

pleasure

pleasure in some Divine history with her curious needle, than in the alluring scenes of the most Tickling comedy.

She loves but one, and that is him she should, viz. her husband, and she loves him because he is so, and if he prove cross or unkind it may exercise her patience, but never destroy her affection.

This love she demonstrates in the whole series of her life by endearing obligations, and the greatest respect, as remembring the duty of her place, and that God and the law have appointed him to be her head, and therefore endeavours to conceal his infirmities, as knowing them to be her own dishonours, and is as much ashamed to shew her self wiser than her Husband in company, as some pragmatical Gossips are proud to be thought to have more wit than theirs, and if ever she be forced to tell him of a fault, she does it so sweetly, and with so much discretion, that he finds reason to be angry with himself, but none to be offended with her, who studies his temper, to work the better effects on his humours, takes the fittest opportunities, and has a special care never to speak out of season, and so avoids scoldings and clamours as the plagues of marriage, and commands by obeying, and rules the roughness of his spirit by the soft compliances of hers; a flint that defies the anvil may easily be broken upon a feather-bed.

Her industry and frugality are no less remarkable than her discretion, she considers she is called a house wife, and endeavours to make good the Title, both

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by refraining from gadding abroad, and abhorring sluttishness and flatternly tricks at home; she provides liberally for her family, but has an eye that nothing be wasted, and remembers that an ill manag'd Kitchin has destroyed many a noble Hall; She knows no necessity for a breakfast in her bed, and can get up without being roused by the Trenchers ratling to dinner; She spends more time in prayer and exercises of devotion, than between the glass and the dressing-box; She suits her cloaths to her husbands quality and ability, rather then the fashion, yet loves neatness, and cannot indure any paint on her cheeks, but the natural vermillion of modest blushes; her good man dares trust her with his cash without an exact account, nor does she call him to task for every odd Two-pence, She is not perpetually draining his purse for Modish vanities, and envies not her next Neighbours New Gown or richer Laces, she never upbraids him with her portion or parentage, and is better imploy'd at Church, then to observe who has the finest Fan, the best suits of Knotts, or the most glittering Pendants. She is very tender of her Children, and thinks them her choicest treasure, yet gives them no occasion to curse her hereafter for over-fond Indulgence, she is courteous and sociable to her Neighbours, but scorns to go a Hunting for Gossipings, and thinks her time better spent at home (though but in patching a Dish-clout) than in idle visits, or expensive Assignations for carrying on the grand affair of tatling; in brief, she is Religious, without Hypocrisie, discreet without

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out pride, loving without folly, pleasant without vanity, grave without clownishness, and he that enjoys her, has no greater happiness to wish for on this side Heaven.

And now Sirs, I doubt not but you like the Wife I propose well enough, and begin to cry, Where is she, Where is she; Truly I shall neither send you to Vtopia, nor direct you point-blanck to her dwelling, for she lives very privately, some say 'tis at the sign of the Philosophers-Stone, in Phœnix Alley, in Non-such street; but if you will but observe the following Directions, and add thereto a competent dose of your own discretion, 'tis much to be hoped you may light upon one of her Sisters.

1. Let piety and solid vertue be the prime motive of your addresses, for be sure where those are wanting, let the proverb say what it will, those marriages were never made in heaven.

2. Let her be descended of honest parentage, yet not too high above your own degree; For where there is too much difference in quality, 'tis rare, if they draw equally in the marriage yoak.

3. Be not cheated with the modish conceit of a brisk and airy Girl, least her lightness weigh down your head with a pair of stately horns; a solid breeding and dehortment is infinitely more commendable than that fantastical Gayty; singing, dancing, &c. are innocent accomplishments, yet can scarce answer for the charge and time lost in acquiring them, and are far more taken in a mistris than a Wife.

4. Never

4. Never let money bribe you to a loathed bed, or make you accept of a wife in whose person you can take no delight; yet do not on the other side cast away your self for a pretty face, which three days Sickness can destroy.

5. After her qualities, let your next consideration be her portion; for though Riches alone of themselves are not a sufficient ground for a Match (for then it would be not a Marriage, but a Bargain and Sale) yet they are excellent good and comfortable additions; The hottest love being apt to cool and decay, where there is not the fewel of a Competent estate to feed and maintain it.

6. Though, Vertue, Riches, and good Nature are excellent things by themselves, yet joyned all together, they are not enough to Justifie your choice, unless she be fit to, I mean of a like humour, and agreeable temper to suit with yours. For all love is both begot and continued by likeness.

I have a great many other Documents to give you, but I fear here are more already then you will have patience to regard: And therefore I shall conclude with the Parson; So much shall suffice for this time.

# FINIS.